

Thursday Evening Bible Study

Series: the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods

Teaching Summary for Week 37

The Kingdom and the Covenants

Part 6. The future Messianic Kingdom in Old Testament prophecy

Five major subjects in the future prophesied Kingdom

5. The **Temple**: Worship in the Millennial Kingdom
 - i. The Millennial System of **the Priesthood and the Offerings (Eze 44:1-46:24)**

There are three main questions that need to be answered to overcome these difficulties concerning the literal animal sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom:

1. Isn't this a return to the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Covenant, which ended with the death of Christ on the cross?
2. Isn't it heresy to claim that blood sacrifices will be required in the Millennial Kingdom for the forgiveness of sins, since Christ is the one perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins?
3. Wouldn't these future animal sacrifices contradict the teachings of the New Testament, especially the book of Hebrews?

Last week we answered the first two of these questions.

First of all, there are many differences between the sacrificial system under the Mosaic Covenant, and the sacrifices, offerings, and feasts that Ezekiel foresees.

We reviewed a list of 15 differences between the Mosaic sacrificial system and that of Ezekiel's Temple.

These differences prove that Ezekiel's offerings and sacrifices are not a return to the Mosaic Covenant. Rather, they represent a new system of worship.

Therefore, this new system does not contradict the New Testament teaching that the Mosaic Covenant ended with the death of the Lord.

In answering the second question, we saw that the animal sacrifices and offerings under the Mosaic Covenant did not take away any sins.

The Lord required those sacrifices and offerings back then, even though they were weak and worthless and made nothing perfect (Heb 7:18).

Their obedience in this was their acknowledgement that **only the Lord** could forgive sins.

That will also be true for the nation of Israel during the Millennial Reign.

The sacrifices and offerings in the New Covenant will not take away sins either.

Ezekiel and the other prophets did not say that the sacrifices in the Kingdom will be for the forgiveness of sins.

Only the Lord could forgive sins. And He did! He provided the precious Lamb as the one perfect sacrifice for our sins.

God has always given His people a way to proclaim the death of the Lord. To worship the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.

The Lord has also given the church a regular way to proclaim the death of the Lord.

1 Cor 11:23-26

*23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you **proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.***

Notice the phrase "until He comes". When the Lord comes, the New Covenant will be established. The New Covenant will have a new way of proclaiming the death of the Lord with its own unique animal sacrifices, offerings, and feast days.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Lord has always requires His people to worship the death of the Lord.

We saw Abraham in the book of Genesis offer the burnt offering (Gen 22:4-14).

The **burnt offering** was performed BEFORE the Mosaic Covenant was established!

We also saw in the oldest written book of the Bible that Job also offering burnt offerings (Job 1:1-5).

Go all the way forward to the book of Revelation and the heavenly worship of the death of the Lord. The angels and the living creatures and the elders will all worship the Lamb who was slain for the sin of the world.

Rev 5:11-14

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

*"Worthy is **the Lamb that was slain** to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."*

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

*14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And **the elders fell down and worshiped.***

The system of animal sacrifices was given to Israel as their way to worship the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.

Does it really make sense that there would be no proclamation of the death of the Lord in the Millennial Kingdom?

Why would the sacrifices that proclaim the Lord's death be left out of the worship protocol for the Millennial Kingdom?

Israel is God's earthly people. The church is completely distinct from Israel.

The New Testament epistles describe the form of worship suitable for the God's heavenly people – the church.

During the church age, Jewish believers cannot return to the Mosaic sacrifices under the Mosaic Covenant. That covenant ended with the death of the Lord.

The book of Hebrews was written to explain this to Hebrew Christians.

Our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, is now in heaven at the Right Hand of God the Father.

But the New Testament does not forbid or condemn future animal sacrifices under the **New** Covenant, in the Kingdom.

Not even the book of Hebrews does that.

Heb 10:8-10

*8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices **FOR SIN** YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. 10 By this will we have been **sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

The Lord does not desire sacrifices and offerings FOR SIN.

Heb 10:16-18

16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:

*I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,
AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"*

He then says,

*17 "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS
I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."*

*18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering **for sin**.*

There is no longer any offering for SIN.

But that is **not** the same thing as saying that the Lord will not include sacrifices and offerings FOR PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH during His Kingdom Reign.

At His second coming, Christ will once again be on the earth as the Messiah.

How will the citizens of the kingdom worship Him?

Keep in mind that the Lord will fulfill His covenants with Israel in the Millennial Kingdom.

What form of worship was given to the nation of Israel? The Temple, with its sacrifices and offerings and feasts.

Hebrews tells us that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins.

Heb 10:4

*4 For it is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats **to take away sins**.*

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That was true in the Mosaic Covenant. It will remain true in the New Covenant.

Because Christ hadn't died on the cross yet, the Lord gave the people of Israel the Temple and certain feast days (especially the Day of Atonement) to deal with their sins during their time on earth.

Jesus will be the greater High Priest forever. As such, He is the guarantee to Israel of a better covenant to come – the New Covenant

That is why He said what He did to His Jewish disciples the night before He was to die on the cross:

Luke 22:14-21

*14 When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. 15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it **until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**" 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on **until the kingdom of God comes.**" 19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is **the new covenant in My blood.**"*

Note carefully: Jesus did NOT say that the Passover will be abolished by His death.

Not at all! In fact, He says the opposite. He says that He will eat the Passover meal when it is fulfilled in the Kingdom! He says the same thing about the Passover cup.

The same cup represents the **new** covenant!

Since the Feast of Passover will return in the Kingdom with a whole new meaning, why shouldn't that also be the case for sacrifices and offerings?

By the way, the **church** also has our own **new Passover** that we celebrate.

1 Cor 5:6-8

*6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For **Christ our Passover** also has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us **celebrate the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of **sincerity and truth**.*

Jeremiah foresees the day when the nation of Israel will forget about their deliverance from Egypt (the original significance of Passover) and instead celebrate a greater deliverance – into the Kingdom.

Jer 23:7-8

*7 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when they will **no longer say**, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from **the land of Egypt**,' 8 but, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and **from all the countries where I had driven them.**' Then they will live on their own soil."*

This gives you some idea of what Passover will mean in the New Covenant.

Passover and Tabernacles (feast of Booths – Zech 14:16-19) are the two feasts that will be celebrated in the Millennial Kingdom.

Pentecost (feast of weeks), Trumpets and the Day of Atonement are not observed – or at least the prophets do not mention them being observed in the Kingdom.

In the book of Leviticus, the sin offering was made for atonement for sins committed by individual people. As soon as the person realizes he has sinned, he is to bring his offering to the priest.

Lev 4:27-31

*27 'Now if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty, 28 if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, then **he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin which he has committed.** 29 'He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30 'The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. 31 'Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat was removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.*

Ezek 45:13-20

*13 "This is the offering that you shall offer: a sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat; a sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley; 14 and the prescribed portion of oil (namely, the bath of oil), a tenth of a bath from each kor (which is ten baths or a homer, for ten baths are a homer); 15 and one sheep from each flock of two hundred from the watering places of Israel — for a grain offering, for a burnt offering and for peace offerings, to make atonement for them," declares the Lord God. 16 "All the people of the land shall give to this offering for the prince in Israel. 17 "It shall be the prince's part to provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the drink offerings, at the feasts, on the new moons and on the sabbaths, at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel; he shall provide the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering and the peace offerings, to make atonement for **the house of Israel.**"*

*18 'Thus says the Lord God, "In the first month, on the first of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. 19 "The priest shall take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the door posts of the house, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar and on the posts of the gate of the inner court. 20 "Thus you shall do on the seventh day of the month for everyone who goes astray or is naive; so you shall make atonement **for the house.***

The sin offering in Ezekiel is made for the entire house of Israel. It is offered at regular intervals rather than at the time a particular sin is committed.

There is no sin offering prescribed for individual sins.

Also, there is no mention of sins being forgiven in connection with the offerings that Ezekiel describes.

This is exactly what the book of Hebrews predicts:

Heb 9:26-28

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

*27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so **Christ** also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin**, to those who eagerly await Him.*

How are we to worship the Lord? That question reverberates down the centuries.

The Lord always clearly explains how He wants His people to worship Him.

The sacrifices, offerings, and feasts were the manner in which the nation of Israel worshipped the Lord under the Mosaic Covenant.

Under the New Covenant, these sacrifices, offerings and feast will once again be the manner in which the nation will worship the Lord.

These offerings and feasts covered the full spectrum of worship, because the Lord watched over every aspect of their lives.

Yes, some offerings and feasts were observed to cleanse from the defilement of sin.

But they also celebrated the blessings from the Lord. They celebrated the harvest. They celebrated their deliverance from Egypt.

They expressed their thanksgiving to the Lord by means of an offering.

They expressed their gratitude for being reconciled to the Lord by means of an offering: the peace offering.

How are we to worship the Lord during the church age?

Our sacrifices are spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pe 2:4-5)

We are to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice.

Rom 12:1

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy **sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2*

These are the sacrifices of the Lord's heavenly people – yet they are sacrifices nonetheless.

In no way are these heretical. They do not violate or obscure the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Phil 4:18

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Our sacrifices include presenting our bodies in service to others.